

Oregon law makes tattoos illegal for under 18 age teens—even with parental consent

■ CARLY HALVERSON
Staff Reporter

Teens under the age of 18 do not have the option in Oregon of obtaining a tattoo legally even if their parents approve. Doesn't it seem a bit silly that when parents give their child permission to be tattooed, the law will not allow it?

The fact that permanent ink and needles are used should not be the reason older teens are denied access to safe, legal tattooing. Wouldn't it be better to have teenagers attain tattoos from experienced tattoo artists rather than unlicensed or inexperienced amateurs? There are teenagers who have tattoos being done unprofessionally and unsafely because many teens who have such a strong desire to have a tattoo see no other option.

The requirements for tattoo artists in Oregon show that artists go through a formal process to demonstrate that they know what they're doing. Artists have to be 18 or older with a high school diploma or a (GED). They must take 360 hours of training from a career school licensed by the Oregon Department of Education. Professionals moving to Oregon from another state may try to apply if they have two years

of full time, documented experience. Even with all of those requirements, 15 hours of education is

decision of the parents and the teen—not the law.

Tattoos can be removed. Laser surgery,

dermabrasion, and surgical excision are three different ways to remove them according to the American

Society for Dermatologic Surgery. Yes, the idea of getting a tattoo is that it will be permanent, but the fact that it can be removed is another reason why it should be okay for under 18 teens who want tattoos to do so with parental consent. Prices for tattoo removal ranges from \$100 to \$1000, and it can be painful, but that's a price some people are willing to pay.

I feel that reducing the age limit to 15 with parental consent is reasonable with parents actually accompanying their teen to the tattoo parlor. We may not be legal "adults," however, everyone should have the right to choose what they do with their own body. Having parental consent and even parental presence while the tattoo is being created is only right and should be acceptable under Oregon law.



Jordyn Warrington, senior, bares her tattoo, which means "God most high" in Hebrew during a shoot for a friend's photo project. Warrington had her tattooing performed in Canada three years ago.

Photo by Hillary Obye

required every three years to continue having an Oregon License.

Tattoos are a unique way for people to express themselves. Some people use tattoos as a way to chronicle milestones, or to represent something that is important to them with a visual symbol. One objection is that a tattoo is a permanent part of the body; however, that should be the

Homework causes major stress, teachers unaware of workload?

Homework hassle

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Many students find certain classes to be more rigorous and to require more time, and so students that receive what their teachers think to be an hour worth of homework may take longer for students who

continuously struggle with these classes.

Students need more rest, and they need to be able to relax. I recently stayed home from school due to sleep deprivation for several weeks on end to the point where my body couldn't take it any more.

The workload that students are being required to finish is out of hand.

"I think most of the time students fall behind because they either procrastinate, don't use their class time efficiently, or do not ask the right questions when I'm going over the homework," Tana Dearborn, Chemistry teacher, said.

Although this is true, sometimes teachers may forget that students have five other classes besides their own, and therefore don't realize that eventually the homework adds up. It is too difficult for most students to be asked to finish all their homework, participate in sports or other activities, stay awake during class, and be fully rested the next day, ready to function at a high level. This is a never-ending cycle for some students and it needs to be broken. Homework loads affect all students on sports teams, students who struggle in school, students who have jobs, students who have AP and honors classes. This affects ALL students, not only the procrastinators.

"I can't change my workload for one student who decided to take multiple AP classes. If students are having trouble or are falling behind they should come in before or after school and get extra help," Dearborn said. Teachers should also talk to their students about the length of time it took them to complete their assignments and plan the homework load according to the ability of the students.

Tanners take warning! Cancer may be dead ahead

Tanning

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In the younger years, skin is vulnerable since young children are still growing and developing. "Most parents seem to be concerned about reducing sun exposure when children are small. I believe that it is just as important to continue to model and educate our teens about UV exposure risks and reduction practices" Montgomery said.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, 70% of indoor tanners are female, primarily 16 to 29 years old, an age group that's particularly at risk for developing skin cancer. People should not get the wrong idea, getting some sun once in a while is a healthy aspect of life.

"There are unavoidable adverse exposures to many things that we receive in our lifetime. It is

inconceivable to me that some would voluntarily pay for such exposures," Montgomery said.

Teens are at greater risk because they are still experiencing growth at the cellular level, and, like other cells in the body, the

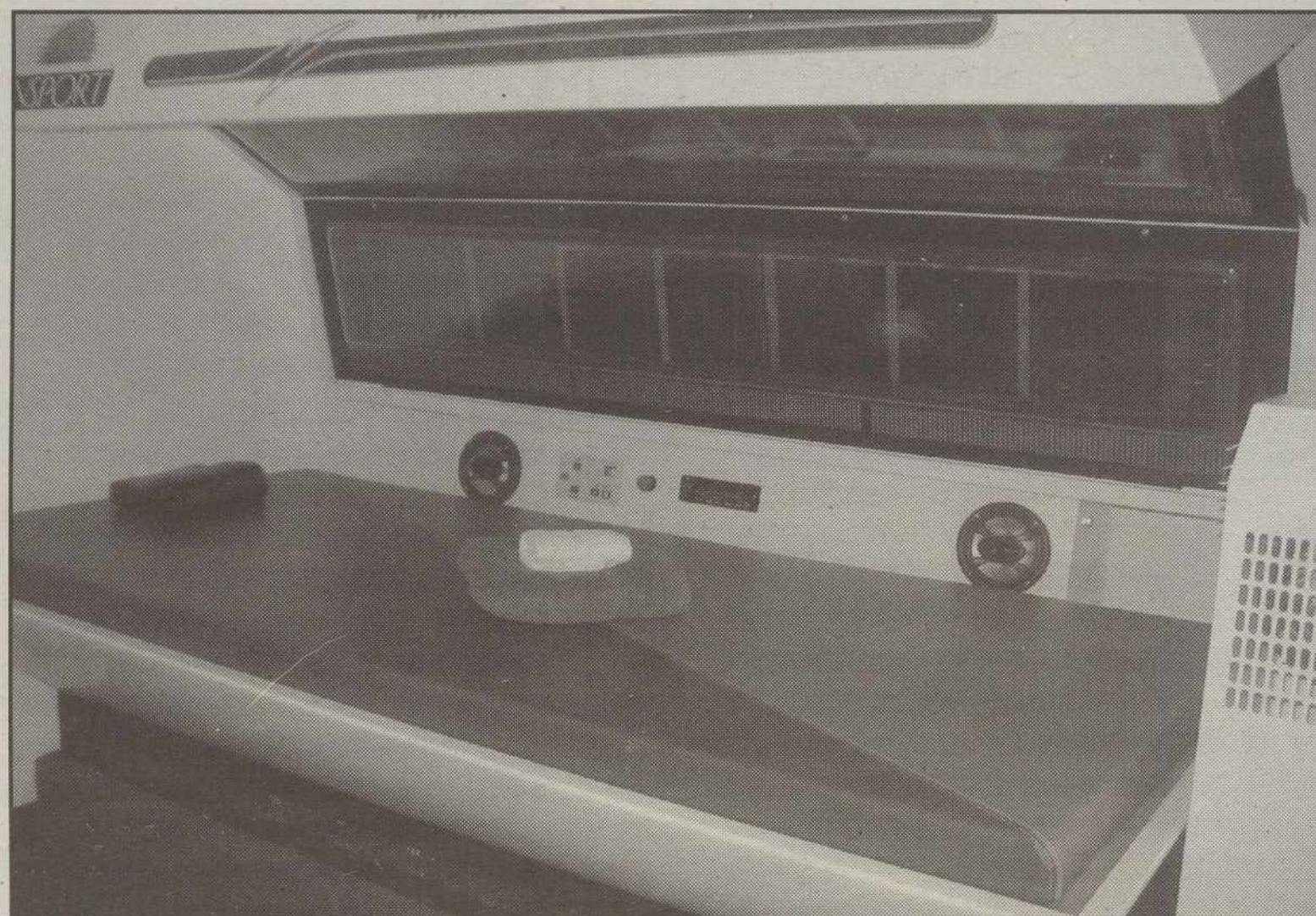
skin cells are dividing more rapidly than they do during adulthood.

"What is needed is a cultural shift away from the belief that tan is pretty. There have been studies that show that teens are aware of the risks but do it anyway,"

Amanda K. McCullough, Department of Molecular & Medical Genetics, at OHSU said.

The need for people to be tan is something that has been embedded in their minds as the way people should look all year long.

There has been concern over the past several years that people, and in particular teenagers, are using sunbeds excessively to acquire tans in the hopes of becoming more socially desirable. Most teens, even though they know the risks, are willing to take the chances, which is dangerous in itself.



A typical tanning bed located at Islands Tanning and Nails at West Linn Central Village. Artificial tanning beds and other products have been used for many years and the concern for health risks are growing as statistics show that tanning artificially can greatly increase one's risk of cancer.

Photo by Jessica Broberg